

High Sierra Leadership Expedition

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STEP
SECOND-YEAR TRANSFORMATIONAL
EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The High Sierra Backpacking Expedition is an intense, 21-day backpacking trip through the High Sierra mountain range. It is offered by the Outdoor Adventure Center (OAC) at Ohio State and includes integration of outdoor leadership techniques and curriculum during the 170+ mile trek. Leadership theories are taught through active participation in activities such as Leader of the Day. Before this trip, participants are required to prepare extensively for the mental, physical and emotional hardships of this challenge. While completing the trip, participants will get to revel in the beauty of the High Sierra while making lasting memories with the people who choose to make the journey with them.

Sunset at McClure Meadow.



WHAT I LEARNED

This trip required that we prepared educational lessons based on subjects concerning environmental conservation and backpacking, along with lessons on leadership theories. These lessons, along with real life experienced helped me learn so much about leadership and the environment. Some of these lessons included:

- How to pack a backpack
- “Leave No Trace” conservation techniques
- How to pitch a tent
- How to read a map
- Wildlife of the High Sierras
- Theories of leadership
- And more

Group photo.



O-H-I-O on Mount Whitney.



FAVORITE EXPERIENCE

I made a lot of great memories while I was completing my STEP project. However, one of my favorite experiences was the morning our group summited Mount Whitney. This profound experience was one I will never forget. I also really enjoyed meeting new people and forming friendships.

ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

In special education, the obstacles presented to a student may seem as hard as climbing a mountain. But, with the right amount of perseverance, motivation, patience and effort, you can overcome any obstacle. I will take this lesson with me as I go on to my teaching career, and use it in my personal and academic life as well.

A view in the High Sierra.



CONCLUSIONS/PERSONAL IMPACT

On this trip I was given a lot of time to reflect and think about what is important in my life. I have grown mentally, physically and emotionally because of it. This project has impacted me personally by forcing me to push myself to achieve goals that I may not have thought possible before. It has shown me how to motivate myself and others to do the things that may not always be easy. I believe that this has made me stronger in my convictions and more dedicated to the things that are important to me. I believe it will help me to be the best teacher, friend, student, and person I can be.

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